

REMARKS

The Office Action dated March 8, 2007, has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

By this Amendment, claim 2 has been canceled, claim 1 has been amended and claim 7 has been added. No new matter is presented. Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in at least claim 2 and Fig. 1 as originally filed. Claims 1 and 3-7 are pending and respectfully submitted for reconsideration.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogino (JP 10-139401) in view Fairlie et al. (WO 00/69773, "Fairlie"). As noted above, claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 3, 5 and 6 depend from claim 1.

In making this rejection, the Office Action asserted that Ogino discloses many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of a second line, also comprising all of the same elements of the first line so that a portion of the generated hydrogen stream is fed separately to one of the fuel cells (100). The Office Action asserted that providing a duplicate line from the reformer (30) of Ogino, which includes the purifying means, pressurization means, and storage means, to one of the fuel cells (100) would amount to a duplication of parts. The Office Action cited Fairlie for teaching splitting the gas generated in a reformer to various users 16.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogino in view of Fairlie and applied to claim 3 above, and further in view of Fujitani et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,728,483, "Fujitani"). Ogino and Fairlie were cited for disclosing many

of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of the heat being a waste heat of the reforming means or a waste heat of the first fuel cell. Fujitani was cited for curing the deficiency.

To the extent that the rejections remain applicable to the claims as currently pending, the Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claims 1-6 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references.

Claim 1, as amended, recites in part, a second purifying means, located upstream of the second storage means in the second supply line, for purifying hydrogen gas reformed by the reforming means and that the second supply line begins downstream of the first purifying means. As a result of the claimed arrangement of elements, hydrogen supplied to the second storage means is supplied through the first purifying means and also the second purifying means.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, Ogino does not disclose or suggest a second supply line, second storage means and second purifying means. The Applicants respectfully submit that Fairlie fails to cure the deficiencies in Ogino with respect to amended claim 1, as Fairlie does not disclose or suggest at least the combination of features of a second purifying means, located upstream of the second storage means in the second supply line, for purifying hydrogen gas reformed by the reforming means and that the second supply line begins downstream of the first purifying means. In contrast, Fairlie merely discloses that the hydrogen production source 10 sends hydrogen through a distribution conduit 20 to users 16. See Fig. 1 of Fairlie.

The Applicants further submit that the claimed invention is not a duplication of parts of Ogino as asserted in the Office Action, because the claimed arrangement provides that the second supply line also carries hydrogen gas that has been purified by the first purifying means, to the second purifying means. As such, Ogino does not support the Office Action assertion that the claimed arrangement of elements is a duplication of parts.

In view of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that Ogino, in combination with Fairlie, fails to disclose or suggest at least the combination of features of a second purifying means, located upstream of the second storage means in the second supply line, for purifying hydrogen gas reformed by the reforming means and that the second supply line begins downstream of the first purifying means, as recited in amended claim 1.

With respect to claim 4, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Ogino, Fairlie and Fujitani fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Claim 4 depends from claim 1. As discussed above, Ogino and Fairlie do not disclose or suggest a second purifying means, located upstream of the second storage means in the second supply line, for purifying hydrogen gas reformed by the reforming means and that the second supply line begins downstream of the first purifying means. Fujitani also does not disclose these features of the invention. Therefore, Fujitani does not cure the deficiencies in Ogino and Fairlie with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, the cited references do not disclose or suggest the features of the invention as recited in dependent claim 4.

In view of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for purposes of a rejection of claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Further Considerations

As discussed above, a result of the claimed arrangement, hydrogen supplied to the second storage means is supplied through the first purifying means and the second purifying means. Hydrogen supplied to the first storage means is supplied only through a first purifying means. With the claimed arrangement of elements, it is possible to supply hydrogen with a higher purity to the second fuel cell which is purified by the first purifying means and is further purified by the second purifying means, than hydrogen supplied to the first fuel cell, which is purified only by the first purifying means.

Conclusion

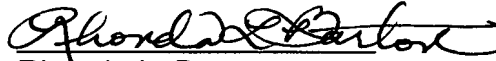
The Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 3-7 depend from claim 1 and incorporate the patentable aspects thereof. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 3-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), allowance of claims 1 and 3-7 and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an

extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing Attorney Dkt. No. 101175-00035.**

Respectfully submitted,



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